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U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., Chairman of the U.S. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, today **led her Senate colleagues to successful passage of the The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, to reauthorize federal child nutrition programs**. The legislation, passed unanimously, comes at a crucial moment as national child nutrition programs are set to expire on September 30. **The legislation makes the largest investment in child nutrition programs since their inception, setting nutritional standards that ensure schools are serving healthier meals.** The bill is **completely paid for** and received unanimous approval by the Senate Agriculture Committee earlier this year.

"Today the Senate has seized a tremendous opportunity to do what's right for our children and our families," **Lincoln said**. "The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act will finally put us on a path toward improving the health of the next generation of Americans, providing common-sense solutions to tackling childhood hunger and obesity. This is a resounding victory for our nation's children and an investment that will last a lifetime."

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act passed the Senate Agriculture Committee unanimously in March, providing for the first non-inflationary increase in the federal reimbursement rate for school lunch programs since 1973. The bill takes a critical step toward addressing the epidemic of childhood obesity by including a provision requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to establish, through a transparent regulatory process, national nutrition standards consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods sold on school campuses throughout the school day.

"With passage of this bill, we are breathing some fresh, bipartisan air to the Senate," **Lincoln said**. "It just goes to show that when you are willing to roll up your sleeves, work across the aisle, and make the tough choices in a collective, bipartisan manner, that you can see real results. That's what the American people elected us to do, that's what they expect, and that is what this bill represents."

Lincoln has made child nutrition reauthorization a priority since assuming the chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture Committee in September of last year. She has aggressively led to secure passage of the bill before programs expire at the end of September, delivering floor speeches, making repeated national appeals for action, working with both Democratic and Republican senators, and sending a letter to the President urging him to make child nutrition a key legislative priority.

"In this budget environment, with record deficits, we have been able to produce a bill that is fully paid for and will not add a dime to the deficit," **Lincoln said**. "It's the fiscally responsible and right thing to do for our children. At a time when families are scrimping and saving to make their own budgets work, I can't think of a better message to send than to pass a fully paid for bill that will help their children live longer, healthier, more productive lives."

Detailed summaries of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act are available at The Lincoln Substitute Amendment to S. 3307, Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and <http://ag.senate.gov/site/legislation.html>.

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<http://lincoln.senate.gov>

355 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4843
Fax (202) 228-1371

912 West Fourth St.
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 375-2993
Fax (501) 375-7064
Toll Free 1-800-352-9364

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